

An open letter to The Rt Hon Steve Reed, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Dear Mr Reed,

Re Adlington New Town.

If you have been keeping up with the news from Adlington and Cheshire East, you will already know the reasons that Adlington New Town is a proposal that has been met with horror. The loss of prime greenbelt, the loss of productive agricultural land and generational farms, the destruction of valuable wildlife habitats and ecosystems, the pressure on already failing infrastructure, the poor geographical location on the edge of the county and abutting the Peak District etc etc etc.

But I write from a different perspective. Since the Cheshire East local authority meeting on Wednesday 10th December where every single councillor voted in opposition of the proposal, the way forward from here seems slightly more clear.

At the meeting all 70 local authority elected councillors voted, there were no abstentions, it is a cross-party group and they were in unanimous agreement that the entire council opposed a new town being built in any form, at Adlington.

It should be noted there were councillors and speakers there who support new towns as a concept and councillors that acknowledge the need for more homes in our county, but not one single one thought Adlington New Town was the way to do it. Adlington New Town, without doubt, proposes the wrong homes in entirely the wrong location.

So, I think it is a question for government now. Surely you could not and would not want to impose such a huge decision on a community that entirely opposes it? How could you?

This isn't just our small village, (who have, it is now proven, been unjustly accused of NIMBYism so many times on this journey) but this is vast scale opposition. We have to date;

Tim Roca our Labour MP - OPPOSED
Opposition MPs from neighbouring constituencies - OPPOSED
Cheshire east council - unanimously OPPOSED
Adlington parish council - unanimously OPPOSED
All neighbouring parish and town councils - unanimously OPPOSED
Ben Fletcher, mayoral candidate for Cheshire and Warrington - OPPOSED
Council for the protection of rural England - OPPOSED
Cheshire Wildlife Trust - OPPOSED
Farm businesses and other businesses located within the boundary - OPPOSED
Doctors at local medical partnerships - OPPOSED
NHS staff at Macclesfield and Stepping hill hospitals - OPPOSED
Local Community - OPPOSED.

Given this level of total and unanimous opposition, and the fact that both the now disbanded New Towns Task Force and the National Association of Local Councils have demanded a community first approach to new towns, it must become the case that the decision makers (and it's hard to know exactly who they are but it must rest ultimately with you Mr Reed) know at this point that Adlington is never going to progress any further as a considered location. Given that, we ask, even beg, please, please, come out publicly with an early decision and a statement removing Adlington from the list of 12.

I understand you may feel this is an unnecessary step, perhaps you think why not just leave it till Spring and not choose Adlington then, why faff around now making that public statement?

The answer is, because you are holding people's lives in your hands. It is no exaggeration to say that the local community have, since the end of September when we found out about this, been living in a constant state of torment. The stress, worry and upset that this has wrought across our village has been immense. The strain and pressure it continues to put on the mental health of the whole community is unbearable, this is on our minds, weighing us down 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

On behalf of my small (but mighty) community, I beg you Mr Reed, please be our Santa Claus, please give us some peace of mind for Christmas. Remove Adlington from the list now and let this village breathe again.

Yours with hope and faith,
Aysha Hawcutt.